'minority' is pending before the Supreme Court of India and this aspect may be kept in view while taking and action in the matter. The National Commission for Minorities was advised accordingly.

National Commission for Old People

*120. SHRI RAJNATH SINGH SURYA: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering declaration of the National policy on old people in this International Year of the Old;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether setting up of a National Commission for old people is also being considered; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI): (a) to (d) Yes, Sir. A National Policy for Older Person is under consideration of the Government. The policy will seek to ensure the well being of older persons by attending to their financial security, health care, shelter, welfare and other development needs. However the setting up of a National Commission for old people is not under consideration of the Government.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

Export of Food Items

776. SHRI S. RAMACHANDRAN PILLAI: SHRI A. VIJAYARAGHAVAN:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number and quantity of food items exported during the last three years, item-wise separately; and

(b) the effect on the availability and price front in internal market?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) A Statement is ANNEXED *[See* : Appendix 185, Annexure No. 21]

(b) The policy of the Government to permit exports of food products is governed principally by the concerns of India's food security, maximising incomes and earning foreign exchange. Review of export performance of food products is an on-going process and accordingly policy interventions are made, as and when considered necessary with a view to making food exports increasingly viable.

Vegetable Shipments from India

777. SHRI E. BALANANDAN: SHRI C. O. POULOSE:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that export of onions make up 90 per cent of India's vegetable shipments and bring in over Rs. 300 crores annually;

(b) the total production of onion during last three years till August, 1998;

(c) the demand and supply of onion in the country in the last three years; and

(d) the amount and earnings from the exports during the above period?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) No, Sir. During 1997-98, exports of onion accounted for about 52 percent of vegetables exported from India in value terms.

(b) & (c) The total production of onion in India during the years 1995-%, 1996-97, 1997-98 and 1998-99 is as under:

Qty.: Million tonnes

Year	Production
1995-96	4.08 (estimated)
1996-97	4.43 (estimated)

Year	Production
1997-98	3.68 (advance estimates)
1998-99	4.45 (rough estimates)

(SOURCE Ministry of Agriculture, Deptt, of Agriculture & Cooperation)

No reliable estimates of demand of onions are available.

(d) The value of exports of onion during 1995-96, 1996-97, 1997-98 and 1998-99 is as under:

(Rs. in crores)

Year	Value
1995-96	230.72
1996-97	265.21
1997-98*	202.45
1998-99* (April '98 — Aug. '98)	117.22

(SOURCE: DGCI&S, Calcutta *Provisional)

Performance of Exports in Different Sectors

778. SHRI AKHILESH DAS:
SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to statt:

(a) how far exports in different sectors have picked up since the package to kick-start stalled exports was declared on August 5, 1998 indicating the sector-wise performance, month to month and the comparative figures for the preceding six months;

(b) what is the overall assessment of export performance with respect to different global markets and major countries importing Indian goods; and

(c) how far the package has proved successful in preventing the adverse impact of the sanctions imposed by the 'G8' countries in the aftermath of N-Tests conducted by India and Pakistan in May, '98?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) Sector-wise performance for the months before and after the package was announced is enclosed statement-I *(see* below). Details of commodity-wise exports quantity and value are available in the monthly and annual publications of the statistics published by DGCI&S, Calcutta, which are available in the Parliament Library.

(b) Our exports to major regions of the world for April-August, 1998 is enclosed at Statement-II *(see* below).

(c) It is too early to judge the impact of the package announced in August. No. major impact on merchandise trade has been felt on account of sanctions so far.

Statement-I

Sectoral Performance after the announcement of the Scheme to resurrect export trade. (Rate of growth over the corresponding period for 1997)

	Major Sector	Growth			
		April—June 98		April—August 98	
		(US$)	(Rupees)	(US$)	(Rupees)
1.	Plantation	13.61 -15.54	29.40 -	22.49 -	42.01
2.	Agri & allied	-6.36	3.80	1.05	14.72
3.	Marine products		6.65	6.14	23.06